

SOCIAL SCIENCE.

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MEETING OF THE AMERICAN SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION.

THE OPENING SESSION IN DETROIT—ADDRESSER BY DAVID A. WELLS AND DAVID A. WASSON.

[FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

DETROIT, Mich., May 11.—There was good attendance at the Opera-house this evening at the opening of the meeting of the Social Science Association. An address of welcome was delivered by Judge C. I. Walker of Detroit. Mr. David A. Wells read his address. Mr. Wasson's paper was read by Prof. C. K. Adams. Dr. D. W. Lincoln of Boston read a report from the Department of Health introducing papers in relation to the health of pupils in public

ADDRESS OF DAVID A. WELLS.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRODUCTION AND ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: In welcoming you to this first meeting in the States of the North-West of the American Association for the Promotion of Social Science, the address which I have the honor to read is a question of the nature of things seems to require should be made by the presiding officer on such occasions, I propose to ask your attention to a line of thought touching two agencies, which, perhaps, need more attention than they have received, namely, the molding and development of society, namely, the production or accumulation, and the distribution of that which we call capital, material, theory, abundance of all those things which contribute to our well-being, comfort, and

Only this problem has it, that never before in the history of the world has man, through the control which he has obtained over the forces of nature, and by the aid of his tools, been able to produce so much with a given amount of personal effort. One such familiar illustration of this is the Panama Canal. The canal evolved through the combustion of fuel and applied to the performance of work, the expenditure of the energy of at least one hundred millions of men; or, to state the case differently, the result attained is to the same as if the actual labor of twelve billion men were expended. The canal, therefore, without rendering necessary any corresponding increase in production for the support and sustenance of the laborer, has been able to produce the equivalent of a labor force, but one less familiar and more potent, is afforded by the construction and operation of the Suez Canal. The canal, which connects the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea, and thence, via the Cape of Good Hope, was from 1190 to 1200, years. Now steamers by way of the Canal make the same voyage in twenty days, and the result is that the enormous stock of goods continually required to be held on hand, involving risk of depreciation, loss of interest, and the expense of storage, is reduced to meet the requirements of mere transit. And to which the fact that the improvements in marine engines have enabled steamships to make the voyage that they could some seven or eight years ago, and, that the construction of the Suez Canal has enabled them to make the voyage in twenty days, also to regulate their supply without carrying excessive stocks of commodities, keeps prices steady and the movement of trade and commerce a saving and a release of capital and labor for other purposes and employments that amounts almost to

What I've to do is accomplished in the way of increasing the proportion of product to manual labor, thus increasing the productivity of the laborer. I think I can indicate that we are approaching any limitation to further progress in this direction. A writer in *The Nation*, who has claimed that the industry of the population of Great Britain at that time, taking the year 1850 as a basis, was one-eighth of what it is now, in 1890; and I do not think any one can review the industrial experience of the United States as a whole since 1850, without being struck by the fact that the power of production during that time, and in spite of the war, has not been less than from 15 to 20 per cent. And, I think, it is well to bear in mind that it is mainly within the last 15 years that the very great improvements in machinery have been made, and that whereas, a few years ago, much of the great pains of the best our grain with the cradle and the threshing machine, the same work may be done now almost as a matter of recreation; the director of a factory, with gloves on his hands and an umbrella over his head, and in the still finishing the work in one-half of the time, and in a manner almost man-of-street. I would also recall to you that in our manufacturing process, the power of the steam engine, the power of the machine, can produce as much in a given time as six men, and, I think, must have done in 1850. I think we are approaching the limit of the increase of the power of the machine to assist us in the work of exchange and distribution; that we can send our telegraphic lines across the continent, that we can send our telegraph lines across the continent, and finally, taking the Pennsylvania Central Railroad as a type, that we can send our freight at an average of 15 cents a ton, and that we can send our passengers at a rate of \$1.00 on the same road for the same service.

But as a curious incident of this continued process, it may be here also noted that the abandonment of large quantities of coal and iron, and the replacement by new, is permanently rendered a matter of absolute economical necessity, in order to prevent the destruction of a much greater amount of capital by industrial rivalry, thus straining the resources of the country to the utmost. I think best called by my friend Mr. Atkinson of Boston, that the absolute destruction of our hat business here would often make room for a great increase in material accumulation—the breaking up and destruction of the old machinery and the substitution of new, and the consequent change of the social conditions under which a diminution of the cost of production could be effected and the accumulation of profits increased.

We are often accustomed to speak of, and perhaps look forward to, a period when, by a sudden stroke of want of all those things that minister to our material comfort and happiness, that when this period shall have passed, we shall be able to turn our eyes to the things that are eternal, and so far change his nature as to be able to exist in contentment without a supply of all those things that clothing, shelter and luxuries—use the forces of nature must be so much further subordinated and sacrificed to the necessities of the soul, and that we shall, instead of now doing only a part, and that because in every respect our souls diminish and serve.

But when that time comes, then all material wealth as we ordinarily understand it, must disappear; for that only is wealth which is not subject to change, and that which has an exchangeable value when it is desired; but we can neither give value or desire that which the air is of all things given to all, chosen of any possible use of

But that fanciful may be just this speculation. It is conceivable that the time material process is constantly in this same direction inasmuch as the great result of every day is the production of a new thing, and the new thing is of a distance value—making those things dear which were before cheap, and bringing within the reach of the masses those things which were before the monopoly of the few. Thus, in 1179 Thomas à Becket was accounted extravagant because he had his shirts cut with a gold fringe. In 1579, when Shakespeare's shirts cost him four shillings in each, but now—admittedly in a different age—four shillings are the price of a shirt, and making allowances for the purchasing power of money at different epochs, Falstaff's four shillings would now give him a pair forty times the size of that which he wore.

That this wonderful and combined increase in the human dress and the human enterprise has been also attended with a general rise in the standard of comfort, security and enjoyment everywhere, is a fact which is not only the most superficial observation, but also is a great variety of statistics. Thus for example, in the last century, the average life of Germany was 35 years; in the present century it is 45; and of Germany to become cotton has at least doubled since 1851; and that in Sweden the increase has been 100 per cent. In the United States the consumption of cotton cloth increased in 1890 and remote regions, but the ratio of absorption in the United States was to that of the rest of the world as 100 to 1. In 1890, 900,000 bales were to turn

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and the power of charity, and all brotherly kindness; but of the *second*, strikes, trade-unions, the crystallizing antagonism of labor against capital, the spirit and teachings of socialism, the practices of Communism. . . . And there is yet one other thing which society is also beginning to find out; and that is, that these same questions relating to the production and distribution of wealth affect an increasing number of classes of interests than those measurable by dollars and cents.